

## 2009-2010 Grant Proposals

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### Margaret Boyd Research Partnership with Avon Public Schools Classroom Innovation Grant

**Project Description:** As part of my Sociology of Education class this term we have established a research partnership with the Avon Public School District to help them better understand the needs of their diverse student body. This project is an opportunity for my students to be involved in a community based learning project based in Avon, MA. We have been invited to coordinate the existing information the school district has on each student and analyze this data to look for patterns and trends with regards to student outcomes. We will also be involved with qualitative data collection and analysis; interviewing a sample of students, staff and possibly parents in relation to their experiences of the school climate, programs and academic opportunities. The school district is particularly interested to learn more about the nearly 1/3 of their student body who transfer into their district for schooling. My students will compile their findings into a final report that will be presented to the School district at the end of term or early into Spring 2010.

I am requesting help with funding for this CBL research initiative including:  
Digital Audio Recorders (6). Digital recorders are critical in allowing the researcher to be a more active listener and engaged in the process of communication. There are 12 students in my class and it is expected that 6 will be involved in qualitative interviewing. (Please see my note below).

Qualitative Software: XSight Semester License (2). The purchase of qualitative software would allow my students to learn the skills and techniques of qualitative data analysis and to apply this knowledge to better understand and identify patterns and connections between and within the data collected with students, staff and parents. The license for XSight Semester is limited to six months. A longer licensing agreement would be beneficial but also of additional expense. (Please see my note below).

**Benefits to the Stonehill community:** The benefits of this CBL project for my students are expected to be many. First, in designing a research project my students will need to follow stringent IRB guidelines especially as they may be working with children and youth in school settings. The students will have the opportunity to learn one or two software data analysis programs - SPSS and XSight, to look for trends and patterns that might affect student outcomes in the Avon Public School system. Students will learn through this project how to apply sociological theories, perspectives and methodologies to questions concerning educational experiences and achievement using a variety of measures. The students have been asked to coordinate their findings into a finished report and to present their findings to the Avon District School Committee. All students will have a copy of the final report that may be discussed in future graduate school and/or job applications.

There will be continuing opportunities for our students to be involved with data collection and analysis in Avon as a SURE student or as a research assistant.

I am part of a panel of faculty presenting on CBL initiatives at the NESAC conference November 7, 2009 at Northeastern University. A student might join our presentation panel to include their experiences and comments on this research partnership as a CBL project. Students will be invited to collaborate with me on an article submission regarding this CBL experience.

**Community Outreach Plan:** The Avon Public School Superintendent said that they have a great deal of data collected, in various formats and files but they do not have the resources to systematically analyze the data that would better help them serve their diverse population. They are very pleased to have the help of our students in looking at this data to help them with their present and future planning needs. The Superintendent has asked that this be the beginning of an on-going research partnership with the Department of Sociology at Stonehill College. This partnership strengthens and builds on an already established relationship between Avon Public School District and our Department of Education.

*Proposed Budget:* 6 Digital, audio recorders - Olympus WS - 500m, 2GB @ \$99.99 each for a total of \$599.94  
Qualitative Software - XSite Semester. 2 licences @ \$95.00 each for a total of \$190.00  
Total amount: \$789.94